

Ontario

ONTARIO HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR, 74 VICTORIA STREET, TORONTO 1, TEL. 365-6841

Government
Publications

CA20NL 72

SL62

October, 1969

SERVICES FOR WORKING PEOPLE

More than seven hundred people have sought help from the Commission's pilot project office in downtown Toronto during the first four months of activity.

Services for Working People was launched in May as a joint effort with the Manpower Services Division of the Ontario Department of Labour. The three-fold aim of this project, as stated by the Honourable Dalton Bales, Q.C., Minister of Labour, is to let people know the opportunities available to them as new Canadians, to protect the public from discrimination and unfair practices and to inform the public of their rights under labour legislation. The project team will also be involved in research in order to document the effectiveness of their services.

Recent immigrants, mainly from Portugal, Italy, England and the West Indies, as well as native Canadians have been well represented among the visitors to the drop-in office at College and Major Streets. While only 69 people visited the office during May, the numbers rose to 180 in June, 257 in July and 233 in August.

Many are in need of counsel and advice regarding employment. Career decisions, upgrading, training and re-training are major concerns of the immigrant. Other complaints involve racial and ethnic discrimination, financial problems, disputes with landlords, difficulty with other agencies or unfair employment practices.

BOARD OF INQUIRY ANNOUNCED

The Ontario Human Rights Commission announces the appointment of a Board of Inquiry to conduct a public hearing into complaints of alleged violations of The Ontario Human Rights Code.

Mr. Vince Miccoli, Mr. Stan Hanomen, Mr. Harendra Thakrar, Mr. Joe Tritto and Mr. Roberto Bandiera allege that they were on several separate occasions refused admission to the Maple Leaf Ballroom at 665 St. Clair Avenue West, Toronto, because of their colour, nationality and place of origin.

Professor Harry Arthurs, Associate Dean of Osgoode Hall Law School, will preside at the Board to be held on October 21, 1969 at 10:00 a.m., Osgoode Hall Law Building, Room 101, York University, 4700 Keele Street, Downsview.

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BOARD OF INQUIRY ADJOURNED

A Board of Inquiry into the complaint of Mr. Keith Simms, a Negro from Jamaica, who alleges that he was discriminated against in employment matters by Ford Motor Company of Canada Limited (Ontario Truck Plant) Oakville, was adjourned shortly after it began on September 23, 1969 by the Chairman, Professor Horace Krever. Professor Krever wished time to study the respondent's contention that the hearing should be postponed pending the disposition of a grievance related to the incident, that was filed by the complainant under the collective agreement between U.A.W. Local 707 and Ford. Professor Krever's ruling is expected shortly.

NEGRO STUDENT FROM MOZAMBIQUE INVITED TO RENT FLAT

A thirty-one year old graduate student from Mozambique, studying Economics at the University of Toronto, complained to the Commission that he was denied rental of a flat because of his race and colour by the landlady. The student saw a sign in the window of the dwelling and on making inquiries was told he could not have the flat which was still vacant.

In a conciliation meeting, Commission officers were able to effect a resolution satisfactory to both parties. This included an invitation to the complainant to rent the accommodation. The meeting was held at "Services for Working People", the downtown store-front office of the Department of Labour.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN CONNECTICUT

The twenty-first Annual Conference of the International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies, of which the Ontario Commission is a member, was held in Hartford, Connecticut from August 5-9, 1969. The Commission was represented by Dr. Louis Fine, Chairman; Daniel G. Hill, Director; and George K. Lewis, supervisor of the Southwestern Regional Office. The Chairman presided at a dinner meeting where the speaker was Miss Joan Lester, M.P., from London, England. The Director served as chairman of a panel on the subject of "Protest, Dissent and Civil Disobedience".

WINDSOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT REPORT

There has been widespread interest in the report of the Windsor Advisory Committee on Employment which was presented to the Honourable Dalton Bales, Q.C., Ontario Minister of Labour, in May, 1969. Over 300 copies of the report have been circulated to social agencies in Windsor and other cities, community organizations, human rights groups, ethnic organizations and newspapers, labour officials, university sociology departments, government officials and other interested individuals. Follow-up activity regarding the recommendations of the report will begin in Windsor shortly.

CONSUMERS' GAS COMPANY RESTATES EMPLOYMENT POLICY

Recently the Consumers' Gas Company re-issued the employment policy under which it has operated for many years in order to make known to its employees a philosophy of which it is justifiably proud. It has been published in the Company magazine, The Blue Flame News, posted on all Company bulletin boards, and sent directly to all the firm's management and supervisory staff. A copy was also sent to the presidents of all the unions.

The Commission wishes to commend the Consumers' Gas Company for both the adoption and circulation of this policy and takes pleasure in reprinting it here in full:

"It is important that we at Consumers' remind ourselves, from time to time, of the policies and philosophies by which we live in our commitment to our customers, our employees, our shareholders, the communities which we serve, and the public at large. One such philosophy is outlined in our employment policy - a policy which serves to emphasize our aim to create a climate of understanding and mutual respect, in which people, of whatever racial, religious, or cultural background, will feel that they are all equal in dignity, rights and opportunity.

To that aim our policy is restated below:

"Throughout the Consumers' Gas System -

1. No person is ineligible for employment or promotion because of race, creed, colour, national ancestry, or place of origin.
2. Further, no person under the compulsory retirement age of 65, is ineligible for employment or promotion because of age provided he or she is physically and mentally capable of doing the work required.
3. Eligibility for employment and promotion is determined on the basis of physical and mental fitness, record of past performance, and general qualifications such as education, experience, skills, training and any other such qualifying factors as may be required for the job vacancies available. It is understood that pre-employment medicals, reference checks with previous employers and schools, aptitude and mental ability tests may be used to assist in determining the suitability of applicants for job vacancies."

(signed)

Okah L. Jones,
Chairman of the Board
and President,
The Consumers' Gas System.

STAFF CHANGES

Mr. Herbert A. Sohn, Assistant Director of the Commission, is on leave of absence from the Commission to commence studies toward obtaining a Doctor of Social Work degree from the University of Toronto. Mr. Trevor W. Berry has been appointed to assist the Director in handling the administrative work of the Commission.

Miss Dorene E. Jacobs, Education Officer, will also be on leave of absence to continue her studies toward a Master of Education degree in Adult Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

The Commission is pleased to announce two new additions to the clerical staff. Miss Gilberte Fontaine has been appointed clerk-typist to The Age Discrimination Act Division and Miss Carol Chegahno will be the Commission's new receptionist.

THE COMMISSION'S LIBRARY

Human rights legislation all across Canada and the United States is constantly being strengthened and broadened in coverage. In an effort to maintain an up-to-date collection of such legislative changes in the O.H.R.C. library the Commission requested copies of current statutes from forty-one jurisdictions. The response was highly gratifying and similar requests will be made each year.

Extensive use was made of the library during the summer, particularly by teachers, both in high schools and community colleges, who are responsible for planning study units relating to human rights and minority groups. Research personnel associated with the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education also found helpful material for pamphlets on Canadian social issues for use in high schools.

AGE DISCRIMINATION ACT DIVISION

Education Program

During September advertisements appeared in the major daily newspapers in the province informing the public of the provisions of the Age Discrimination Act and indicating where complaints can be filed. In addition, a public service announcement has been supplied to all Ontario television and radio stations. The announcement provides information about the meaning of the Act and its enforcement. Both these undertakings are part of an on-going program of education about the Act and the recent amendment prohibiting discriminatory age specifications in employment advertising.

Favourable Response Continues

The Commission has continued to receive an overwhelmingly favourable response to recent mailings sent to employers and other organizations enclosing copies of the pamphlet, Guidelines for Employers on the Provisions of the Age Discrimination Act. The Canadian Manufacturers' Association has forwarded the pamphlet to its 4,000 Ontario members as part of its June, 1969 issue of the Ontario Division News. School boards, unions, Chambers of Commerce and companies have all requested additional quantities of the "Guidelines" for their staffs and expressed support for the legislation.

Recent Cases

A complaint was filed against a Toronto drug company by a 55 year-old woman after her husband, an employee of the firm, was informed that she was not hired for a job as packer because of her age. Investigation by the Commission revealed that a few months earlier a memo had been forwarded to staff by the Managing Director advising them of the provisions of the Act and asking their adherence. In settlement of the matter the company entered into a Memorandum of Agreement offering the complainant the position for which she had applied and a letter of assurance regarding their policy.



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Two men, both long-time employees of a city fire department, complained to the Commission that opportunities for promotion were denied them because of their ages, 57 and 58. It was discovered that a city council resolution had approved a plan to appoint younger men to the positions in question. Through conciliation efforts the Commission was able to secure the following undertakings as resolution of these complaints: (1) amendment of the city council resolution by deletion of the term "younger" from the promotion policy; (2) invitations to the complainants to discuss their qualifications with regard to promotion prospects.

NEWS FROM THE REGIONS

Southwestern Regional Office

The Southwestern Regional Office has been active in completing various educational programs involving Indian reserves in the area, resort area owners, social agencies and all those on the Southwestern Special Mailing List.

A display was set up for one day in the office lobby which adjoins the Detroit tunnel passenger exit. Literature was distributed and questions were answered by staff. On July 30th, a press conference was held at the Detroit Press Club where Mr. George Lewis invited American tourists to use our office's facilities.

The Amherstburg Mayor's Committee on Race Relations has been working diligently on affirmative action programs in an attempt to place more minority group people into jobs in the area. The Committee has also served as an effective mediator in several human rights cases involving the citizens of Amherstburg.

The Windsor office is still handling numerous housing, employment and public accommodations complaints. In addition, 9,000 pieces of literature went out to members of the public in July, 1969.

Eastern Regional Office

The Ottawa office has recently initiated several new projects in addition to its continuing work in the investigation of complaints under the Code.

A summer "blitz" of resort areas revealed that while many establishments had posted copies of the Code Card and were abiding by its provisions, some problems of discrimination in the Cornwall area needed Commission attention. Several Ottawa hotels have decided to begin human relations training programs for their staffs in the fall with the assistance of the Commission.

The Eastern Regional Office will continue this fall a preventive education project in the Ottawa, Cornwall, Hawkesbury and Renfrew County schools. In addition, the office is undertaking an educational program with new immigrants to the Ottawa area. Research and study is continuing into the special problems of French Canadians in the Ottawa region.

Finally, the Ottawa and Northern Regional Offices have been instrumental in establishing the Sudbury Mayor's Committee for Human Rights.

Northern Regional Office

The Northern Regional Office is conducting a program of educational visits to Indian communities throughout northern Ontario. Since June visits have been made to Spanish River, Mississauga, Serpent River, Whitefish River (Birch Island), Sheguiandah, Longlac No. 77, Longlac No. 58 and Mission, with a second follow-up visit to Constance Lake.

The Ottawa and Northern Regional Offices recently assisted in the formation of the Sudbury Mayor's Committee. The Committee had been in the planning stages for many months, and now has a functioning ad hoc group of concerned citizens. The new group will conduct research into Sudbury's discrimination problems and report the results to the appropriate government bodies. Education in human relations through the mass media is also anticipated.

The northern office has been invited to assist in planning a human rights component as part of the core content for the Social Services Curriculum at Confederation College of Applied Arts and Technology.

